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It is argued that the process of globalisation undermines the nation-state. From the perspective of the rescaling theory, however, the argument would rather be that the spatial dimensions of the state are being reorganised, leading to an upscaling as well as a downscaling of political steering capacities. With global cities becoming more important as nodes of capital accumulation, this results in a greater significance of locational politics for these cities. Although it has been researched how the neoliberal agenda has trickled down from the national level to the scale of the city, literature on rescaling has widely ignored the role of the sub-local scale. We argue that the neighbourhood scale has gained importance in scale politics because city governments increasingly shift neoliberal projects to the sub-local scale.
We present empirical evidence on these neighbourhood politics with a detailed case study analysis of the city of Zurich. Based on qualitative expert interviews and an in-depth document analysis, we show that the cities' policy to increase the quality of life in distressed neighbourhoods is closely related to Zurich's overall economic strategy to promote the attractiveness of the city as a whole. Zurich's neighbourhood policy primarily focuses on improving the image, rather than the quality of life in these areas by means of physical renewal policy or increasing social service. A negative image of certain areas is seen as hindering the overall competitiveness of the city. The neighbourhood policy is thereby part of the new urban neoliberal paradigm. We also show that the city delegates social policies to the neighbourhood scale where they sometimes just fade away. We conclude our paper by pleading for a scalarly open analysis of the neoliberal turn, which has to include the sub-local scale.

Keywords: neighbourhood politics, rescaling, urban entrepreneurialism

Introduction[1]

For the first time in history, more people live in urban than in rural areas since the year 2008 (United Nations 2008). The implications of this ongoing urbanization trend go way beyond a pure population effect. Le Galès has called the newly (re-)gained importance of cities in economic and political matters a "retour des villes" (2003). The physical growth of cities has caused problems on several scales: An unbowed urban sprawl leads to increased coordination problems between core cities and agglomeration communities (i.e. metropolitan governance,

[1] This article is based on research conducted within the international comparative research project 'Regenerating Urban Neighbourhoods' (RUN).

(i.e. metropolitan governance, Heinelt and Kübler 2005)); the multi-level governance scheme of national states is confronted with mega cities blasting communal, regional, and sometimes even national scales of governance; and to a certain extent these mega cities have become "ungovernable" due to their size and their rapid growth.

Surprisingly, we witness diminishing participation rates in local elections on the urban scale in several countries (Wood 2002, Kushner and Siegel 2006). Whether this points to a democratic deficit in cities is a hotly debated topic (Purcell 2007). It is however to a certain extent unsurprising if we look at the spatial orientation of the inhabitants of large cities. The every-day radius of ordinary citizens stays relatively small even in large urban areas. The neighbourhood has consequently become the most important scale for the daily life of citizens, whereas the scale of the city has lost importance in this respect. Additionally, scholars (as e.g. Musterd and Ostendorf 1998, Bolt et al. 1998) have pointed to an increasing spatial segregation of modern cities in business districts, distressed neighbourhoods, nightlife districts and many more. The inhabitants, the users, the visitors, and the workpeople of one of these spatially specialised neighbourhoods might have nothing in common with those of an adjacent neighbourhood. Even more so, the differences of the everyday life of the citizens of two neighbourhoods of one and the same city are often bigger than the differences of the everyday life of the residents of two comparable neighbourhoods in two different cities. It has thus become debatable what the city actually is and if the political-spatial organisation of cities still corresponds to the spatial organization of the everyday life of its inhabitants. Consequently it is questionable if *urban governance* is still the correct term to describe political action in modern cities. Many scholars have pointed to a retreat of the state also on the urban scale (see e.g. Brenner and Theodore 2002, Swyngedouw et al. 2002) but have not analysed the scalar component of governance questions and the role of neighbourhoods therein. Neighbourhood governance studies (see e.g. Lowndes and Sullivan 2008) usually put a focus on distressed neighbourhoods and possible solutions to problems inherent in these areas. However, scholars (see e.g. Slater 2006, Lees 2008) have point to unintended effects of such neighbourhood renewal programs: Gentrification describes the process of displacement of long-term residents due to increasing rent levels and the increased attractiveness of renewed neighbourhoods for middle-class people (Smith 2002). Common to these analyses of neighbourhood governance is that they fail to investigate links to urban governance as such. What is standard to analyses of urban governance and neighbourhood initiatives is their "scalar blindness". The analysis usually remains limited to the scale under scrutiny but neglects the possibility of scalar shifts, especially out of strategic interests of the involved actors. We therefore plead for a spatial analysis of urban governance in the age of globalisation that looks at the rescaling of urban governance beyond the city scale (both up- and downwards). We will address this spatial question of urban governance with an analysis of the politics of scale of cities and their neighbourhoods and especially their interlinkages. To do so, we will provide a brief introduction into the theoretical notion of a rescaled statehood and the special role of city-regions within this theoretical strand. Pointing to the missing inclusion of the sub-urban (i.e. the neighbourhood) scale, we will show in the remainder of this paper how important neighbourhood politics has become in the age of a globalised economy and a glocalised statehood. We will also show that the neo-liberal turn in urban

politics and the politics of scale between the urban and the sub-urban scale are much more interlinked than expected. We will show this with empirical material from the city of Zurich and its neighbourhood governance between social cohesion and economic competitiveness.

Politics of scale and neighbourhood governance

The rescaling approach develops its argument from an economic deterministic position. It is the scalar reorganisation of the global economy that is followed by corresponding political adaptation processes (Brenner 2004). The transition from a Fordist to a post-Fordist regime goes hand in hand with a transition of statehood (Jessop 2002). In the Fordist era, national states were able to generate revenues due to consistent years of steady GDP growth. The national state then redistributed part of its revenues downwards to the communal level which allowed cities to overcome the social inequalities that were most persistent within their borders with large redistribution programmes (Jessop 1994: 254ff.). The economic crisis of the 1970s then changed this system of a hierarchical interplay between the national and the local scale as the income basis of the state eroded. Conflicts on interscalar redistribution consequently increased (Peck and Tickell 1994: 306). With an accelerating economic globalisation from the 1980s onwards, state revenues further decrease due to a neoliberal agenda on the national scale. However, as proponents of the rescaling approach highlight, this "hollowing out" (Jessop 2004) of the national state is not necessarily a retreat of statehood as such, but might be better conceived as a complex scalar redefinition of statehood (Wood 2005). This rescaling of statehood happens through the two inextricably interlinked processes of up- and downscaling. Upscaling refers to the increasing importance of global and especially supranational political bodies as the EU or the WTO and the shift of political decision making power from the national global institutions (Jessop 1994: : 270f.). Downscaling refers to the shift of political steering capacities to the urban scale due to the latter's gained scalar importance in the global economy (Goodwin et al. 2006). From the economic deterministic logic of the rescaling approach, cities gain political steering capacities as they gain economic importance as nodal points of capital accumulation in a globalised economy (Scott 1996). The economy as well as politics are thus organized in a *glocal* way (Swyngedouw 1997).

City-regions thus gained political importance in the age of economic globalisation. However, it is unclear whether city-regions use these newly gained political steering capacities to contest the neoliberal turn of the national states or if urban politics is in line with the shift towards a neo-liberal economically oriented policy-making that the national scale has already implemented (van der Heiden and Uffer 2010). Most authors within the rescaling approach predict pessimistically that the latter will happen. The entrepreneurial city (Hall and Hubbart 1996) is increasingly engaged in a global economic interurban competition (Mayer 1994: : 318f.). This implicates “a reorientation of urban governance away from the local provision of welfare and services to a more outward-oriented stance designed to foster and encourage local growth and economic development” (Hall and Hubbard 1996: 153). This new form of governance aims to promote the city as an attractive location for business interests and investment. Wealth redistribution and welfare are considered as antagonistic to the overriding objectives of economic development (Peck & Tickell 2002: 394; Jessop 2002: 465). The new

entrepreneurial strategy leads to a system where cities are considered as the main actors in global competitiveness (Brenner 2004: 172-73). This leads to a mechanism of inter-urban competition, where locational politics become the dominant part of urban politics. This implicates a rescaling of economic competition from national states to large urban areas, what Brenner (2004: : 260) calls "a rescaled competition state regime". It is a system in which states become masters of their (economic) faith (Savitch and Kantor 2002) instead of being firmly integrated in a national urban scalar hierarchy as under the Fordist state structure.

It is our goal to investigate the politics of scale with neighbourhoods and its relation to the entrepreneurial city. But what is actually meant by a politics of scale? The idea is that state rescaling processes are not just economically driven but politically steered. It means that policy makers do have the capacity to shift scales and to decide on which scale a certain policy should be dealt with. (Gonzalez 2006) argues in her analysis of the neo-liberal discourse at the city-region's scale of Bilbao that the scalar interplay can only by seen as constructed by the involved policy-makers. The actors use the politics of scale to "explain, justify, defend and even try to impose the link between a particular scale or scalar configuration and a political project. […] In this process, actors engage in a discursive strategy to make their scalar political project seem as natural, normal and legitimate as possible" (Gonzalez 2006: : 838).

This aspect of a politics of scale in a rescaled statehood has been analysed in metropolitan governance in depth, where the politics of scale between the core city and the metropolitan region are of special interest for the neoliberal urban turn (Brenner 2003, Boudreau et al. 2007). Usually, the metropolitan scale with its weak democratic control is seen as the scale where shifts towards neoliberal policy making are more easily accomplishable. Policy makers trying to put forward goals of the entrepreneurial city thus try to upscale from the city to the metropolitan scale, thereby evading resistance on the city scale.

However, as we argue, this politics of scale might not just happen upwards to the metropolitan scale, but downwards to the neighbourhood scale as well. One can draw an analogy to national-local rescaling processes here. The large spatial redistribution programs of the Fordist state from urban to rural areas led to an equalisation of economic prosperity over the whole country (Jessop 1994: 254ff.). The post-Fordist rescaled competition state lost this power and the gained political steering capacities of large urban areas led to a competition of city-regions. Neither the national state nor the city-regions in competition are thus able to equalise spatial social inequalities. The same process can be hypothesised for the city-neighbourhood scalar relation. Whereas the city used to be able to equalise social inequalities between different neighbourhoods, this becomes increasingly difficult when political steering capacity is downscaled to the neighbourhoods themselves.

At the same time, the city is the lowest scale on which democratic input procedures are institutionally established. On the sub-local scale of neighbourhoods, democratic procedures are often much more informal and the impetus into the political system of neighbourhood governance attempts is anything but guaranteed (Purdue 2001). Shifting neoliberal projects to the sub-urban scale might thus accomplish the goal of evading democratic control as much as an upscaling towards the metropolitan scale.

The goal of the following case study of neighbourhood governance in the city of Zurich is thus threefold. First, we want to investigate the content of Zurich's neighbourhood governance and possible shifts over time towards entrepreneurial goals. Second, we will look at links between goals of city politics and neighbourhood governance. Third, we will analyse the democratic control of these rescaling processes.

Neighbourhood development and the politics of scale in Zurich

Our research on Zurich's regeneration policies and the politics of scale is based on a qualitative case study[2] with a focus on two neighbourhoods with a relatively high level of poverty: *Langstrasse* and *Schwamendingen*. This section gives first a short overlook of Zurich's local structure of politics and governance followed by a description of the two neighbourhoods under scrutiny and the area-based problems therein. Then, neighbourhood policies are characterized on the city and on the neighbourhood level.

Zurich's local structure of politics and governance and the Inclusion of the sub-local level

The city of Zurich has a total of about 370,000 inhabitants; there are about 30,000 people living in Schwamendingen, and around 10,000 people living in the Langstrasse neighbourhood. The city of Zurich is divided into 12 districts. These districts cover the historic neighbourhood structure. The population of the twelve districts ranges from around 5,600 to 63,000 residents[3]. But there is no coherent definition of "neighbourhood" for policy purposes. Sometimes "neighbourhood" refers to an urban district, sometimes only to a specific area within a district. Therefore, boundaries of the neighbourhood-policy arena are not always precisely defined and interventions do not cover consistent areas. The *Langstrasse* neighbourhood is part of Zurich's district 4, known as *Aussersihl*. *Schwamendingen* is the district 12.

The city of Zurich is a municipality, which is the lowest level of government in Switzerland, and it has a directly elected government (executive) and parliament. The next upper level of government is the canton of Zürich that also has its own government and parliament. The city of Zürich as a municipality enjoys significant decision-making power and autonomy within Switzerland's political system. The neighbourhood level is not legally institutionalised in Swiss federalism; hence the political system delegates no competences to the sub-local level. The city government consist of nine members and operates as a collegiate authority. The mayor acts as a prima inter pares. Therefore Zurich's executive structure has a collective form. The citizens elect the city government directly every four years. The Mayor's Office includes the Office for Urban Development, which is in charge of regeneration policies (see below).

[2] We analysed official and nonofficial documents concerning neighbourhood regeneration strategies, specific policy interventions, program reports, project evaluation, and newspaper articles and we conducted eight semi-structured interviews with members of neighbourhood and commerce associations, with representatives of the Office for Urban Development, the Department of Social Services and the Police Department, and with a member of the city parliament and an external expert on urban development (interviews are listed in the appendix).

[3] Data according to the statistics office city of Zurich.

The city parliament (legislative authority) is made up of 125 members, with elections held every four years. The members of the legislative body are elected by district. The nine electoral districts are in line with the twelve urban districts except for the districts 1 and 2, 4 and 5, and 7 and 8, which are each put together to form one common electoral district. The average population size of the electoral districts is around 42,000. As the nine electoral districts cover Zurich's neighbourhood structure to some extent, the districts thus have their own representatives in the city's legislative. The twelve city districts and accordingly the sub-local scale in Zurich do not have any formal local authority, but have only administrative functions. This means that no distinct executive or legislative body exists on the sub-local level; the districts only operate as electoral districts for the city as well as the cantonal parliament.[4]

Since the neighbourhood is important for everyday life, countless civic organisations exist on the sub-local level. Most important are the so-called "Quartiervereine" (neighbourhood associations). Neighbourhood associations are politically and religiously neutral, privately organized associations that are open to all interested neighbourhood residents. There is at least one neighbourhood association in each district. Zurich city authorities recognize neighbourhood associations as the official representatives of the local population. They get financial support from the city for their administration and for cultural and community activities.[5] Once a year, the city government gets in contact with the chiefs of the neighbourhood associations at an informal meeting. However, there is no guarantee that all resident-interests are covered by neighbourhood associations. On the contrary, certain resident groups – e.g. foreign residents – are rarely represented in neighbourhood associations.[6] Furthermore, the Zurich neighbourhood associations are very different in inclusion of different resident groups. Their activities and collaboration with other communities of interests or with the city administration varies too. Therefore, neighbourhood associations are neither democratically authorised nor representative bodies.

It has to be mentioned that due to Switzerland's forms of direct democracy, residents principally have the possibility to articulate their requests via initiatives (Kriesi 2005). Therefore, residents can launch neighbourhood topics (such as the prevention of public building projects which affects the view or everyday life in a certain neighbourhood) by launching initiatives on the city scale. 3,000 signatures are needed to enforce a vote.[7] However, the direct democratic instruments are tied to the political-administrative federal structure, i.e. they can only be launched at the city scale. It is therefore easily possible that such neighbourhood requests can be outvoted by a majority of the inhabitants of other areas.

Langstrasse and Schwamendingen: two deprived neighbourhoods

According to assessable income Langstrasse and Schwamendingen are among the most deprived neighbourhoods of the city of Zurich (Statistik Stadt Zürich 2007: 385).

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[4] The degree of institutionalization of the inclusion of the sub-local scale in Zurich is rather low in comparison with other Swiss cities (Joye et al. 1995).

[5] All together they get a contribution of 275,000 Swiss francs a year (Decision of the city parliament GR-Nr. 2007/116).

[6] Personal interviews, respondents A1, B1.

[7] Gemeindeordnung der Stadt Zürich, Art. 15.

Furthermore, percentages of foreigners and of people receiving welfare payments are considerably above average. Both neighbourhoods were a main focus within the neighbourhood regeneration strategy of the city of Zurich from 1998 to 2006. It must be said, however, that in Zurich and in Swiss urban neighbourhoods in general, concentration of socio-economic problems is not as severe as in other European cities.

Schwamendingen is located on the northeastern boundaries of Zurich and can be categorized as a marginalized peripheral working class neighbourhood (Heye and Leuthold 2004). Since the 1980 it has witnessed a considerable rise of the proportion of foreigners.[8] This is perceived as a potential threat to community life: According to a neighbourhood representative, the old Swiss residents "feel aliens in their own neighbourhood".[9] Also, government officials worry about an insufficient population mixture in Schwamendingen. The general assumption is that concentration of marginalized population reinforces problems in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. According to a broad consensus, Schwamendingen also has a negative image because of the relatively high proportion of foreigners and the resulting integration tensions, the traffic noise and pollution caused by the motorway and the air traffic, and its generally low social status (see e.g. Dol et al. 2008: 42).

The *Langstrasse* neighbourhood (and the district 4 as a whole) is a former working class neighbourhood in the heart of the city. Due to the immigration of foreign workers the percentage of foreigners was always far above citywide average.[10] Around 1980 the Langstrasse neighbourhood became the red light district of Zurich. In the 1990s the districts 4 and 5 suffered from the dislocation of the drug users as a result of the first attempt to shut down the open drug scene in 1992. But despite this burden, the former enterprise zone became a famous clubbing scene and gained attractiveness as living environment also for higher income residents. We can observe displacement processes and a reinforcing gentrification process in the Langstrasse neighbourhood (Craviolini et al. 2008). Nevertheless the drug problem and prostitution are still the main topics in the Langstrasse neighbourhood. In comparison with other inner-city neighbourhoods, this area has a higher concentration of drug-related crime, sexual offences, and violence (Schwarzenegger et al. 2006). Segregation is viewed as a serious problem in the Langstrasse neighbourhood too. Government officials and neighbourhood representatives regret the alleged exodus of families over the past decade and the exodus is predicted to continue for the following decade.[11] Wealthy Swiss families are idealised to be the sound population especially for such a distressed neighbourhood. Furthermore, the bad reputation of the Langstrasse quarter as a neighbourhood that is famous for drug dealing and prostitution is perceived as a serious problem according to officials and neighbourhood residents. Creative industries and other "good" business is seen to play a

[8] The proportion of foreigners in Schwamendingen increased from about 16% (citywide around 20%) in 1982 up to over 35% (citywide about 30%) in 2007 (data according to statistics office city of Zurich).

[9] Personal Interview with a neighbourhood representative (respondent B1).

[10] It increased from around 40% in 1982 up to almost 50% at the beginning of the 1990s and then decreased slowly again to 40% in 2007 (data according to statistics office city of Zurich).

[11] Personal interviews, respondents A2, A3, B2. Percentage of families effectively decreased in district 4 including the statistical quarter Langstrasse, but it were predominantly foreign families that moved out from 1993 to 2007 (data according to statistics office city of Zurich). There have always been very few Swiss families (and least of all wealthy families) who lived in the Langstrasse neighbourhood because of its history as a marginalized immigrant working class neighbourhood.

decisive role for the image improvement because it is meant to account for attractiveness of its environment.

Neighbourhood policies in Zurich

Before 1998 explicit neighbourhood policies did not exist as a key issue on Zurich's agenda.[12] For the legislation period from 1998 to 2002, the city government defined, for the first time, the improvement of the quality of life in distressed neighbourhoods as a key goal with the programme "Aufwertung von Stadtgebieten" (i.e. improvement of urban areas) (Stadt Zürich 2001: 13). In the following period from 2002 to 2006, neighbourhood regeneration was again a focal issue on the political agenda of the city government – this time labelled "Lebensqualität in allen Quartieren" (quality of life in all neighbourhoods). Hence from 1998 until 2006, area-based neighbourhood development policy appears as a citywide priority on the agenda. This ended with the current legislation period. In 2006, neighbourhood development ceased to be a key focus of urban development policy.

Unlike other European Cities, where federal programs play an important role in neighbourhood development processes, Swiss federal neighbourhood policy is in an early stage[13] and covers predominantly neighbourhoods in midsize Swiss towns, where neighbourhood regeneration is not yet on the political agenda. Therefore, federal neighbourhood policy is not relevant for neighbourhood regeneration in the city of Zurich. Hence neighbourhood policies in Zurich are not funded by the national government, with one exception: the European Community Initiative INTERREG IIIB program for image improvement in Schwamendingen was funded by the city of Zurich, the canton of Zurich, and the federal government (see Dol et al. 2008).

Neighbourhood policy in Zurich is understood as a broad array of policies to improve the quality of life, especially in distressed neighbourhoods. The idea of a cross-service approach is very common in neighbourhood regeneration strategies across European cities (see e.g. Alisch 2002, Durose and Lowndes 2010) and is also relevant for Zurich area-based policies. In our research, we could not identify a comprehensive strategy beyond this broad understanding of policies to improve quality of life for Zurich neighbourhood policy (see Widmer 2008: 33-34).A multiplicity of administrative units is involved in Zurich's neighbourhood policy. Although the Office for Urban Development was designated to coordinate the implementation of the new neighbourhood policies, it has no power to effectively do so. Coordination is mostly based on informal contacts.[14] Nevertheless, some common characteristics can be found in the various policy interventions related to the city's neighbourhood development: We found a frequently expressed claim for participatory processes; all interviewees considered participation as a major tool in Zurich's regeneration policy. Another focus of these area-based policies is counteracting segregation. Neighbourhood policies should prevent so-called "socially stable" and economically successful residents and most notably families from moving away from distressed

[12] The Department of Social Services did neighbourhood work (community work) before 1998.
[13] Since 2007 the federal government has funded projects for neighbourhood regeneration in distressed urban neighbourhoods with the program "projets urbain".
[14] Information from personal interviews (respondents A1, A2, A3).

neighbourhoods. It should even attract these parts of the population to move into these neighbourhoods. These efforts fall into the category of so-called "social mixing policies" or "poverty deconcentration strategies", which are very common in neighbourhood regeneration (see Lees 2008: 2451).[15] Another focus of the area-based policies is the improvement of the image of distressed neighbourhoods. It is argued that a negative image itself causes problems and can provoke a decline of the quality of life in a neighbourhood and therefore the image has to be improved (Dol et al. 2008).

Neighbourhood policies in the Schwamendingen and in the Langstrasse neighbourhood
The two neighbourhoods under scrutiny differ significantly in the kind of interventions taken by the city government. In the Langstrasse neighbourhood the focus is on public order problems (drug policy and red-light milieu) and physical renewal (e.g. Bäckeranlage), whereas interventions focus more on formation of social capital in Schwamendingen . Several interventions in Schwamendingen were initiated by the Department of Social Services, and they rely on community-based organisation but also on professionally provided services. This included several interventions in selected smaller areas within the neighbourhood, e.g. some actions were taken to reduce traffic, and a playground was built to meet the demand of children and youngsters, or participative language teaching for mothers and their children of preschool age (Stadtrat Stadt Zürich 2001, Stadt Zürich 2005). The Office for Urban development organised discussion forums for neighbourhood development (Fachstelle für Stadtentwicklung and Gesundheits- und Umweltdepartement 2000). It was mainly the Office for Urban development that was in charge of the image improvement process. The project "Image Schwamendingen 2005-2007" was one of the most significant neighbourhood regeneration initiatives of the last years in Schwamendingen.
Under the legislative focal point concerning neighbourhood regeneration, the Langstrasse was identified as a deprived area (Emmenegger 2000: 11, Stadtrat Stadt Zürich 1998). But from 1998 to 2002 regeneration policies in the Langstrasse neighbourhood were still carried out mostly within the scope of the legislative focal point "security" and were subordinated to the Police Department. In 2001 the city government authorized the new project "Langstrasse PLUS", which became Zurich's most important program in the field of "socially integrative city" (Wehrli-Schindler 2002: 12). This project, which is lead-managed by the Police Department, should guarantee sustainable improvement of quality of life in the neighbourhood (Vieli 2005). The project involves a multiplicity of measures ranging from housing to security. But the project itself has only limited resources for project publicity, most of the measures and activities are funded by the project partners.[16] Image improvement belongs to the "Langstrasse PLUS" too: to strengthen local business against the red light industry, the city administration created and funded an association for marketing actions (Vieli 2005: 21).
But why did neighbourhood policy become a citywide priority on the political agenda in Zurich? It seems that the severity of problem does not explain the emergence of neighbourhood regeneration policy in Zurich: at the end of the 1990s, severity of

[15] For detailed information about content and tools of Zurich neighbourhood policies, see Widmer (2008).
[16] Personal interview, respondent A3.

neighbourhood issues was not especially high[17] In the following section, we therefore look for the interactions between the local and the sub-local level in neighbourhood development policy as an explanation for the emergence of neighbourhood regeneration policy in Zurich.

Links between goals of city politics and neighbourhood governance[18]

Zurich's neighbourhood policy is related to a paradigm shift that occurred in the 1990s. In those years, the strategy of urban development, which used to focus on social issues, changed towards an imperative for economic growth in order to position the city in the international benchmark of city regions (Schmid 2006: 167). This is in line with what Harvey (1989) called the transformation in urban governance from managerialism to entrepreneurialism. Since 1998, the city government is dominated by a social-liberal coalition, which promotes economic development and competitiveness policies (Eberle 2003: 67). This newly elected city government actually defined the improvement of the quality of life in distressed neighbourhoods as an official legislative focal point. At the same time, a new administration unit was established: the Office for Urban Development, which reflects this new entrepreneurial urban governance strategy (see Eberle 2003: 135). Whereas it used to be the Department of Social Services that was in charge of community work up to then, the new Office for Urban Development became responsible for the legislative focal points relating neighbourhood policies from 1998-2006. The institutional consolidation of neighbourhood development policies in the Office of Urban Development indicates that these interventions are related to the new entrepreneurial urban governance strategy, since one of the major tasks of this new administration unit is to improve international economic competitiveness of the city region (van der Heiden forthcoming 2010: 84ff.). The attention to quality of life issues in distressed urban neighbourhoods is implicitly contained in the strategy to promote the attractiveness of the location of Zurich. This also explains the focus on improving the image within Zurich's revitalization policy: The city cannot afford the poor international image it gets because of its most deprived neighbourhoods. This means that the neighbourhood scale becomes an important scale for the inter-urban competition (see also Durose and Lowndes 2010: 356). Furthermore, a high quality of life in all neighbourhoods could be helpful in order to position the city in the international benchmark of city regions. Neighbourhood regeneration policy – in a broad understanding of policies to improve the quality of life – is therefore consistent with this new paradigm of urban development as entrepreneurial urban governance.

On closer examination, the focus on so-called "social-mixing" policies in Zurich area-based policies is also in line with the strategy to improve the international economic competitiveness of the city region (Widmer 2008: 76-82): The idea of counteracting segregation through neighbourhood regeneration promises to prevent good tax payers to move out and to attract wealthy residents to live in the city. This means higher tax revenue for the city and allows the city to improve provision of service, which is finally helpful to position the city in the international benchmark of city regions.

[17] For a detailed elaboration of this argument see Widmer (2008: 73-75).
[18] The following argument has already been developed in Widmer (2009).

Democratic neighbourhood development

As mentioned before, participation is generally stated as an important tool in neighbourhood policies in Zurich. The city administration sees neighbourhood associations as important partners for participatory processes.[19] Neighbourhood associations of the city districts differ strongly concerning inclusion of different resident groups and activity. It seems that an active, well-organized, and cooperative neighbourhood association can be a criterion for the city administration to select the respective neighbourhood for a certain policy intervention. In the Schwamendingen area, the neighbourhood association is an important partner for the administration:[20] The Office of Urban Development initiated several participation processes in Schwamendingen. Nevertheless, not only from the city administration side but also according to a neighbourhood representative, participatory approaches are called into question.[21] Several problems are in these participatory approaches: First, it is not possible to include all the approximately 30,000 residents in the participation processes. Second, there is a bias inherent in the mobilisation of residents for participatory approaches, because the foreign population tends not to attend participation processes. Third, there is only a small minority of neighbourhood residents who want to be actively involved in such projects. Therefore, the diverse neighbourhood regenerations projects with a participatory claim risk overburdening the persons who participate regularly.[22]

The situation is quite different in the Langstrasse neighbourhood, where there is a tension between the neighbourhood association and the city administration.[23] In this working class district, there has always been a variety of different interest groups and the relation between the city administration, the city government, and the neighbourhood residents is traditionally tense. Furthermore, this neighbourhood association is not as widely supported by the residents as the neighbourhood association of Schwamendingen. Unlike in Schwamendingen, where many of the impulses for revitalization interventions came from resident organisations, the information flow rather runs in the opposite direction in the Langstrasse neighbourhood. E.g. although the “Langstrasse PLUS” project creates the impression of being a citizens’ initiative, it was in fact initiated and is still led by the Police Department (seeWidmer 2008: 56). Thus, despite the participatory approaches pursued officially, neighbourhood regeneration rather follows a top-down perspective in the Langstrasse neighbourhood and participation does not necessarily mean an official involvement of community residents in program design and implementation of neighbourhood policies, but rather a consultation process.

We argued that not only does the sub-local scale gain importance but also that the new place-based policies imply a shift of certain tasks and competences from the city scale towards the neighbourhood scale. But how does the demand for participatory processes fit into this? At first sight, citizen engagement should lead to more democratic control of neighbourhood development processes. Interestingly, the language of neighbourhood-based work as a means for the empowerment of citizens, especially in deprived neighbourhoods, is very common in regeneration policies across Europe (Guarneros-Meza and Geddes 2010: 121). In Zurich, the

[19] Personal interviews, respondents A2, A3.
[20] Personal interview, respondents A1, B1, D1.
[21] Personal interview, respondent A1, A2, B1.
[22] Personal interview, respondent B1.
[23] Personal interview, respondent A3.

idea of community engagement seems to be also a strategy to govern more effectively. For example in the case of Schwamendingen, the city left the definition of contents of regeneration policies to the neighbourhood association. This can be taken as a delegation of responsibilities towards the sub-local level. Government officials probably expect better compliance by the use of participatory tools and participatory processes certainly help to legitimize policies.

In the case of the Langstrasse neighbourhood as well, we find some evidence for a shift of tasks from the city scale towards the neighbourhood scale:. e.g. various interest organizations were established on behalf of the city administrations (e.g. the association of real estate owners or the association for marketing actions). This can be understood as an intervention to stimulate self-helping mechanisms in a distressed urban area, where – from a city administration point of view – citizens did not engage 'enough' to improve the quality of life in their own neighbourhood. Therefore the claim for participatory processes does not necessarily lead to more democratic control of neighbourhood regeneration processes, but rather signify a strategy to govern more effectively.

If we consider the frequently expressed claim for participatory processes in neighbourhood development policies as evidence of the rescaling of political steering capacity from the city towards the neighbourhood level, this indicates a loss of steering capacity on the city level. There is a slight erosion of power and legitimacy of elected local politicians: the members of the city parliament do not appear as key actors in neighbourhood policy. The neighbourhood associations, which are – at least in some neighbourhoods – involved in regeneration policies, have little influence on the members of the city parliament. With respect to neighbourhood concerns from the point of view of neighbourhood associations, what seems to be more important is the informal contact with members of the city government.[24]. Especially in the case of Schwamendingen, representatives of the neighbourhood association are in regular contact with the executive authority and the city administration. In other words, members of the city parliament, which are actually elected by district, are bypassed in the matter of neighbourhood policies. In this sense – and especially in the case of Zurich, where neighbourhoods have their own elected representatives in the city parliament – such area-based policies can reduce the steering capacity on the city level.

Conclusion

Analysing Zurich's neighbourhood policy has revealed that reflections on the rescaled statehood (Brenner 2004) have to incorporate processes and contents of neighbourhood governance. Proponents of this theoretical debate should consequently follow a methodological approach that is scalarly open (Hubbard 2007) and investigate trends even below the lowest scale of the political-administrative system. With the increasing importance of the city scale in a glocalised statehood (Swyngedouw 1997), the processes of neighbourhood governance so far understood as marginal, internal aspects of cities become crucial for the question of statehood as such.

[24] According to a personal interview with a member of a neighbourhood association (respondent B1).

It is partly because of the missing integration into the institutionalised political-administrative system that the neighbourhood scale has gained attractiveness for projects that can be summarized under the label of the entrepreneurial city. The missing democratic control on the sub-local scale makes a possible resistance towards neoliberal projects difficult to articulate. Politicians consequently use a politics of scale approach (Swyngedouw 1997, Heeg et al. 2008) as part of their concept of the entrepreneurial city. We thus see a new interrelation between the internal and the external aspects of urban politics. Whereas neighbourhood governance has traditionally been used to decrease social inequalities (Kempen 2009), it has now partly shifted and has become part of a project of international visibility, branding and city-to-city competition. The poor image of the two neighbourhoods under scrutiny is increasingly seen as problematic for the international reputation of the city as a whole. Whereas several scholars use a distinction between social and economic goals a city pursues (see e.g. Ache et al. 2008, Savitch and Kantor 2002), we argue for a more interrelated understanding of the two goals of urban politics. Social policies, as e.g. the social mixing of certain deprived neighbourhoods have become part of a strategy of competitiveness (Durose and Lowndes 2010: 356, Widmer 2009).

Analysing Zurich's neighbourhood governance has additionally revealed problems of democratic governance. The inclusion of neighbourhood associations in the neighbourhood revitalization projects of the city differ from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. The openness of the neighbourhood associations concerning participatory possibilities differs greatly, as there is no institutionalised form of democratic governance on the neighbourhood scale. Consequently, using the neighbourhood scale as the scale for urban entrepreneurial strategies puts the newly established democratic inclusion processes at the neighbourhood scale into a different light. The spread of participatory practices in neighbourhoods does not necessarily lead to citizen empowerment (Blakeley 2010: 142), but might contrariwise be part of a neoliberal strategy (see e.g. Elwood 2002, Künkel 2008, Kamleithner 2009, Guarneros-Meza and Geddes 2010). The case study of Zurich showed that the empowerment strategies of the city government in neighbourhoods partially failed to provide a democratic legitimacy for its neighbourhood revitalization programmes.

However, the findings from the case study of Zurich need to be relativised to a certain extent. Zurich is one of the cities with the highest quality of life worldwide (Mercer Human Resource Consulting 2009) and one of the most attractive places for business (Cushman&Wakefield and Healey&Baker 1990-2009). Neither one of the neighbourhoods analysed here would qualify as a distressed neighbourhood in an international comparison. Nevertheless, the city government of Zurich has used a discourse of urban revitalization that argues along the same lines as in cities with severe problems in certain areas. The goal of these policy interventions seem to be to prevent one of these areas to become a neighbourhood that might hinder the international competitiveness of Zurich in the future. There is however broad consensus that Zurich is still far away from such a scenario.

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Appendix:

Sector	Interviewee	Date	Reference
City administration			
Office of Urban Development	Project manager neighbourhood development , special subject participation	5.5.2008	A1
Department of Social Services	Head of section Community Work (GWA) districts 3, 4, 5	29.5.2008	A2
Police Department	Project manager “Langstrasse PLUS”	28.4.2008	A3
Neighbourhood organisations			
Schwamendingen	Chairwoman neighbourhood association of Schwamendingen	7.5.2008	B1
Langstrasse	Chairwoman neighbourhood association of city district 4 (“Aussersihl”)	27.5.2008	B2
	Chairman business association district 4	7.8.2008	B3
City parliament	Parliamentarian (SP) electoral district 4/5	15.5.2008	C1
Urban development expert	Political scientist, Synergo	14.5.2008	D1